

Godly Maturity in Global Perplexity, "What Mature Christian's do in Perilous Times" - Part 2

Acts 21:18 – August 2nd, 2009

- Paul has just left Caesarea for Jerusalem knowing full well of the peril and imprisonment that awaits him as the Spirit had warned him.
- Today's teaching is part two of a series I've titled; "Godly Maturity in Global Perplexity," "What Mature Christian's do in Perilous Times."
- I never cease to be amazed at how alive and active the Word of God is in how it applies to our lives though written 2,000 years ago.
- The text before us is such that, if we allow the Holy Spirit to have His way, it can rise from the pages of our Bibles and come to life.
- So much so, that we can take home with us, practical, applicable, and reasonable principles that can in fact, "change our lives forever."
- I don't say this to be hyper-sensational, rather this passage of scripture has the propensity to both change our life and even save lives.
- Here in Acts 21, we have a model with which to learn from, and discern how we can respond with spiritual maturity in perilous calamity.
- Let's look quickly, at the first three as we see what the Apostle Paul, and those who are traveling with him, will face now in Jerusalem.

1. They disagree agreeably (Verses 15-16a)

- Even though they weren't in agreement that it was God's will Paul go to Jerusalem, some from Caesarea still agree to join him anyway.

2. They provide hospitality (Verse 16b)

- An early disciple name Mnason opens up his home to Paul in spite of the fact that before his conversion he was a terrorist in Jerusalem.

3. They give financially (Verse 17)

- One of the reasons that Paul was in such a hurry to get to Jerusalem, was so he could bring financial help to that impoverished church.

4. They grow spiritually (Verse 18)

18 The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present.

v18 The next day all of Paul's missions team go to see James, and we're told that all the elders we're present there at this meeting.

- There's a profound truth that's woven into the fabric of what Luke, by the Holy Spirit writes here about this meeting with this church.

- One commentator suggests that there may have been as many as seventy elders present making up a kind of Sanhedrin of sorts.
- Also, it's believed that the Jerusalem church was a mega-church by now, and probably had thousands of people in attendance.
- In other words, though the Jerusalem church was impoverished and suffering financially, they were growing and maturing spiritually!

- Please don't miss this. I suggest to you; "their financial condition outwardly, was a catalyst of sorts, for their spiritual condition inwardly."

- In other words, these early believers in this, the early church, may have been poor in the eyes of the world, but they were rich in faith.

James 2:5 Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? NIV

Acts 3:2-9 2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. 4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. 6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God: KJV

The story is told of an occasion where St. Thomas Aquinas was walking with a prelate through one of the grand cathedrals of his day. Referring to a coffer filled with precious coins, the prelate remarked, "Behold, Master Thomas, the church can no longer say, as St. Peter, 'Silver and gold have I none!'" St. Thomas was apparently quick with his retort, "Alas, neither can we say what follows, 'In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk.'"

- Let me hasten to say for those here today who may have acquired financial riches; this in no way means that you can't be rich in faith.
- However when in poverty, Jesus is all you have, you'll become rich in faith when you come to the realization that Jesus is all you need.
- Let me say it this way; "this impoverished early church only had Jesus, thus they grew rich both spiritually and numerically in Jesus."